

The Deming Headlight- September 6, 2010

By Matt Robinson

Deming- President Barack Obama has been clued-in on the desecrations of veterans' graves at Mountain View Cemetery, Congressman Harry Teague's office reported Friday.

Congressman Teague wrote President Obama on Monday, Aug. 30, essentially giving the president a brief overview of the situation before asking for help in expediting the replacement of headstone markers and plaques.

"This indignity to America's heroes must be rectified as quickly as possible. The freedoms that are enjoyed by you and I today were provided by these veterans, and this blemish on our nation's commitment to honor those who sacrificed for their country must be erased," Harry Teague writes in the letter. "I respectfully request that you assist me in having these requests for new markers expedited so that we can honor these veterans with dignity and respect."

In a continuation of his response to the acts, members of Congressman Teague's office recently held office hours at the John Strand Municipal Building. The meeting was held to help family members of impacted service members entombed at the cemetery fill out the right paperwork to get assistance.

"It seems like everything is in order," Kara Kelber, Teague press secretary, said. "I think the seven families that came in, those are the ones we actually had next-of-kind available for. The city will request new markers for the rest of them (those without next-of-kin)."

She said the process is running "pretty smoothly," but added that it is not exactly clear when the Department of Veterans Affairs will replace the brass plaques.

Since mid-July, seven plaques of U.S. military veterans resting at the city-operated cemetery have been damaged, and at least have eight been stolen.

For those who may not have been able to attend the office hours, or for those seeking general information, contact Congressman Teague's office at 1-888-9-TEAGUE.